

# TOLERATION

Not to be

# ABUSED.

OR, A

## SERIOUS QUESTION

Soberly Debated, and Resolved

upon

Presbyterian Principles.

*Viz.*

*Whether it be adviseable, especially for the Presbyterians, either in Conscience or Prudence, to take advantage from his Majesties late Declaration, to Deny or Rebate their Communion with our Parochial Congregations, and to gather themselves into distinct and separate Churches?*

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*By One that loves Truth and Peace.*

*Francis Fullerton*

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*Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth, Rom. 14. 22.*

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O R, A

## S E R I O U S Q U E S T I O N

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*The Question Proposed, Opened, and Stated.*

**M**Y Business is not either to *approve* or *censure* his Majesties late Declaration of *Indulgence*: But, finding many of the *Non-Conformists* in doubt what to do, I have ventured to consider, what influence it ought to have upon their *Practice*, in this present *juncture* of Affairs.

The *Question* in short is this.

*Whether it be adviseable, especially for the Question, the Presbyterians, either in Conscience or Prudence, to take advantage from his Majesties late Declaration, to Deny or Rebate their Communion with our Parochial Congregations, and to gather themselves into distinct and separate Churches?*

I take two things for granted: That *they* will choose some way or other, wherein they will desire

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to worship God together : And that they cannot but understand the *Declaration* to be a very strict *Prohibition*, of all such *Private Meetings*, as the Law itiles *Conventicles*. Now, it seems to follow, that the *Presbyterians*, will either joyn themselves with the *Sect of Independants*; or set up for *themselves*; or worship God with the *rest of their Neighbours*, in their several proper *Parochial Churches*. And the plain question now is, *which of these*, is, in *Conscience* or *Prudence*, to be chosen by them.

For the *First*, That the *Presbyterians* should joyn themselves to the *Independents*. I cannot suffer my self to believe or *fear*. This would be to flie to the Tents of the *Enemy*; and tamely to deliver up the *Cause*, that they have so *long* and so *fiercely* managed, both by *Pres*s and *Pulpit*, in the face of the *World*. The *Presbyterian* knows, this Adversary may *chouce* and *deceive* him, but will never be *reconciled*, or in the least measure, yield to him. Besides, the *Scandal* of quitting their former *Profession* without any *Satisfaction* is intollerable, and cannot be imagined. Especially, considering that all *Temptation* so to do is taken away by the present indulgence; which permits the *Presbyterians* to practice by *themselves*, and to save themselves, so far, at least, from their own *condemnation*; who long since concluded the *Sect of Independency* to be a great Schism.

Dr. Cawdry against Owen. For the *Second*, That the *Presbyterians* should now set up for *themselves*, and engage in a way of *publick* worship, *contradistinct* to our *Parochial Congregations*, I cannot easily believe. I am sure they have *no reason* to do it.

I know tis said, That if they should not make use of this *liberty* granted them, they must seem to *under-value*

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value it, and to be *ungrateful* to the granter of it. This may Carry some Colour with *weak* people, but every knowing and *considering* man, sees plainly, that *this* Argument begs *three things*, that are *not* to be granted, which are these.

First, That the *use* of this *liberty* in such a manner, is good, or at least *not evil* in it self. Secondly, that *such meetings* will be *grateful* and *pleasing* to his *Majesty*. Lastly, That no *greater Inconveniences* will follow the *use*, then the *Non-use* of it.

For, though the *King* be pleased to grant them *liberty* to set up their *Meetings*, yet he doth not *command* them to *take* this *liberty*, so that notwithstanding the *Declaration*, it is still in their *liberty*, whether they *will* do so, or *not*. Now, it seems most reasonable, First well to *advise* and consider, what may be the *Consequences* of this *new Experiment* in Religion, before we *trie* it, and whether the *pratice* of such *publick Congregations*, in opposition or distinction to the *Establishment* may not prove very *inconvenient* both to *our selves* and the *Church of God*. And if upon a serious weighing of the *Case*, we shall find reason *so* to judge, without doubt the *Presbyterians* may *thank* his *Majestie* for his *kind Indulgence*, and yet rule themselves according to *reason*, with respect to their own and the *Churches* interest, without Colour of *Ingratitude* to him.

And yet much rather if it do appear by the *Kings Declaration*, that he thereby intended to shew his *positive approbation*, or liking of such *separate Meetings*; but rather, that he lookes upon them as *inconvenient*, and *only Tolerable*, not for *themselves*, but some *other ends*, and consequently, that the *permission*,

mission of them, is a *lesser* inconvenience, that a severe *Restraint* would be, as things *now* stand: I say, if it appear upon debate, *so to be* indeed, then 'tis evident, that both their *ingenuity* and *gratitude* to *God*, and the *King*, will be better express'd by their *Conformity*, and *Loyal Obedience* to the *known Laws* in that case provided, then by the *use* of the *liberty* permitted to the *contrary*.

Especially lastly, if the *matter* of this *liberty* be not so much as *indifferent*, but plainly *evil*, both *in it self*, and the *Presbyterian* judgment; for 'tis well known, that if the *King* should not *only approve*, but *command*, not in a *Declaration*, but an *Act* of *Parliament*, that which the *Presbyterians* *judge*, or *only suspect* to be *unlawful*, *they* will not therefore *change* their judgment or practice; or account that *lawful or fit* to be done, because it is so *approved* or *commanded* by the *King*; much less hold themselves *obliged* in point of *gratitude* to do that which the *King allows only*; though it be *contrary* to their own *perswasion*; as the phrase is.

Thus the *Question* is *opened* and *stated*:

And thus, our *work* is *cut out*, and lies before us: Three things, the *design* of this *Discourse* requires me to make good.

1. That, to *gather* themselves into *distinct* and *separate* *Congregations*, is a *practice unlawful*, in the *judgment* of the *Presbyterians* *themselves*.

2. The *Scope* of the *Declaration* is not to make *such* meetings *more lawful*, than they were before, or to *approve* them, as *good* and *lawful*.

3. The *Inconveniences* of *such Meetings*, especially by the *Presbyterians*, are very likely to be *great*; and indeed *such* as may *justly affright* them from making *experiment*.

While

While I labour to evince *these* three Propositions, I shall make bold to direct my Discourse to my *Presbyterian* Brethren: The *other* Non-Conformists are at a greater *distance*; and I cannot, but look upon them, as more senseless of the *danger*, and more regardless of the *good*, and safety of the *Church*: and more unreasonable in their *Propositions* and *Argum-*  
*entations*; and consequently not so much within our hopes to be prevailed upon, or to hearken to Reason.

And now, *My Brethren*, I beg your *Charity*: (God knows my intention is charitable) and what ever you think of my *ends*, weigh the *reason* of things *indifferently*; least you are *cruel* to your selves and the *Church* of God. Why should not *reason* prevail, when 'tis strengthen'd with *interest*? Save your *souls* from sin, and the *Church*, as much as in you lies, from *Confusion* and ruine; this is certainly, the *end* of the *Work*: and that, methink<sup>e</sup>, should suffice all that are for *Truth* and *Peace* without any further enquiries or thoughts about the *Authour*.

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### S E C T. I. P R O P. I.

*For the Presbyterians to gather themselves into distinct and separate Congregations is unlawful in the judgment of the Presbyterians themselves.*

**F**or the full *Evidence* of this Proposition, let me beseech my *Presbyterian* Brethren to read it in their own *light*: their can be nothing more *clear* in their *principles*, and *Books*, than are most undoubt-  
edly of that *Perswasion*, the *strength* and *stock* of  
thei<sup>s</sup>

their reason is found no where more, then in their Disputes with the *Independents* : and in *nothing* against them, so evidently, and invincibly, as in the present point, their setting up *Altar* against *Altar*, and their *gathering Churches* out of Churches, and yet this very *Evil*, you thus fall into your selves, *Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing that he alloweth.*

Do not you allow our *Parochial Churches* to be *true Churches*? and will you not account that such Congregations, as shall be gathered to your *allowed* places, to be *true Churches* also? and whence can you think to gather such Churches, but out of our *Parochial Congregations*? and is not this to *gather Churches out of Churches*? was not this that *notorious Crime*, even the very same, that *you* have ever charged, and mightily opposed in the *Independents*? Is it not a Schisme in your own Sentences? a Schism from the *Church of England*, and *particular Congregations*? a sinful dividing from our *Governours*, *Members*, *Worship*, and *Assemblies*? That very thing, that rendred the *Brownists*, in the judgments of the *Puritans*, of old, *Rank Separatists*? and *Independency* of late, you know by whom, a *great Schism*? as was said before.

But in a Point of so much *moment* to the Case in hand, give me leave to be a little more *particular*.

1. It cannot be doubted, but the *General Doctrine* of the Old *Puritans* and Modern *Presbyterians* was this, that they could not Conform in the use of the *Ceremonies*, as *Ministers*, yet, both *themselves* and all the *people*, were bound to hold the *Communion of members*, with the *Parochial Congregations*; and that a *Departure* from us, for the *dislike*

dislike of external *Ceremonies* is a *sinful Separation*.

2. 'Tis confess'd, That a few of the *Higher Form* of Presbyterians of *late*, being somewhat inclined in the point, to *Independency*, would maintain, that, because the *Conditions* of our *Communion*, require some things, which they *think* unlawful, or *inconvenient*, therefore, they do *lawfully* absent themselves from our *publick worship*; though I must needs note, that I cannot discern how they are able to *serve* themselves of *that Plea*, as to the things wherein they acknowledge they *can* communicate with us, especially now, since *liberty* is permitted them to *reserve* themselves in such *other things*, as they scruple at.

.. However, this is as clear as the *sun*, that the whole current of *Presbyterian* principles, do bear mightily against *gathering of Churches*, and *joyning in separated Congregations*, as with a little patience will easily appear to the *meanest capacity*.

The *London Ministers* at *Sion Col edge*, in their Letter to the *Assembly of Divines* to that purpose, printed 1645 prove the *Independents* to be guilty of *Schisme*, especially, by these two *pertinent Arguments*: *First*, say they, they refuse *Communion* with our *Churches* in the *Sacraments*: *Secondly* They erect *separate Congregations* under a *seperate undiscovered Government*. Their Conclusion is therefore they ought *not to be tolerated*: and then sure by a stronger *consequence*, they ought not to be *imitated*, in erecting such *separate Congregations*, *independent upon the present Government* of the *Church*.

In the same *Letter* further onward, they charge the *Independents* with three great *Scandals*. 1. That

B they

they separated from the Church. 2. That they indeavoured by drawing Members out of it to make up their *separate Churches*, to weaken and diminish the *Church*. 3. That they indeavoured to get a *Warrant* to authorize both. *viz.* by a *Toleration* from the Magistrate, and then they conclude with these words, *this we think to be plainly unlawful*.

Yea, was *this* ever a controversie among the *Presbyterians*? did ever any *Presbyterian* make a doubt, or a question of it? Did it not wholly lie as a Matter (and the great Matter) of distinction and dispute between the *two great parties*; *Presbyterian* and *Independent*? I am sure it is so set down by the most learned and eminent of the *Presbyterian* Party, in the most synomy and exactest of all the Books written by them. I mean their *Jus Divinum*, or the *Divine Right of Presbytery*. In the *Preface* to that Book, you have a collation of the points *in difference* set down one against another. And *one* not. the least is this: the *Independent* Churches are gathered out of other true Churches of Christ, without any leave or consent of *Pastor* or *Flock*: which the *Presbyterians* condemn with some warmth, in these *wholesome* words, which I wish, all that go under that name, would seriously consider and subscribe to. They are these. *Parochial* Churches are received as *true* visible *Churches* of Christ, and most convenient for mutual edification. *Gathering Churches* out of Churches, hath no foot steps in *Scripture*: is contrary to *Apostolical* practice: is the scattering of Churches: The *Daughter of Schism*: The *Mother of Confusion*; but the *Step-Mother of Edification*.

## Objection 1.

'Tis possible some that would have it so, may make a shift to perswade themselves and others, that the publick *allowance* of the gathered Churches may *warrant* and justifie them, and deliver them from the *scandal* of Schism.

But I answer, there is *one* thing that utterly defeats this Argument, even upon *Presbyterian* principles. 'Tis this. These *New Congregations* can have no matter or members to be built withal, but such as are taken *out of true* Churches: for *such* the *Presbyterians* account our *Parochial Congregations*: and consequently and unavoidably, these *new Congregations*, must be *schismatical*, your *selves* being *Judges*.

Indeed, so far is *Toleration*, in the sense of the *Presbyterians*, from justifying such divisions and *separations*, that *these separations*, being the foreseen *consequents* of *Toleration*, do in the sense of the *Presbyterians* condemn *Toleration* it self. For the warmest Argument which you find in the *Presbyterians* Writings against *Toleration*, as you will see more anon, are ever taken from the *schismes*, and Divisions, which they *feared*, and foretold would follow upon it.

This was the main Scope of all their *Sermons* to that purpose before the *Long Parliament*: (the material passages, you have well collected together in a *Treatise* printed about two years agone, for which *Col. out of cause*, they stiled *Tolleration Intollerable*, a *Sermon of least Schism* should be establish'd by a *Law*, *Dr. Burges*, and the *Church* thereby *undone*: and the

Kingdome itself come to that pass, (as the grave Historian noted of old Rome) that it will neither bear the Remedy nor endeavour the Cure.

## Object. 2.

It was objected heretofore, by the Separatists, and perhaps it may come in use now again, that such as separate from us agree with us in Doctrine, and differ only in *Minutioribus*: and then why should not their Churches be true Churches? I answer the Question is concerning their Schism; and this, none doubt, may be found where true Doctrine, in other points, is maintained. Schism is an error in practice, not in Doctrine.

But, indeed, I find this very objection, in one of Mr. Newcomen's Sermons of one of the most learned and best of all the Presbyterians; and, I beseech you, receive his Answer, which is very weighty, and pertinent.

Supposing this to be true, saith he, that they indeed differ from us in so small matters, why then do they transgress the Apostles Rule? why do they not keep their opinions about lesser matters private, and have their Faith unto themselves before God?

Why do they, upon so small differences, withdraw from COMMUNION with us, and the rest of the Churches? their holding one Head and one Faith, doth not excuse them from being guilty of breach of Union and downright Schism, so long as they hold not one Body, one Baptisme.

Schism or Division, saith he (and he doubtless spoke then the sense of his Presbyterian Brethren) is this, when men are so addicted to some Men or to some out-

outward Rites, that though they do agree in the chief points of Religion, yet they are estranged in their minds, and ingage themselves into Parties and Factions.

Now, who are they, saith he, that though they profess to agree with us in Doctrine, have yet made a secession and withdrawn themselves, gathered Churches, engaged Parties. Consider, and give Sentence.

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S E C T. II. P R C P. II.

*The Scope of the Declaration, is not to make such separated Congregations more lawful than they were before: or to approve them as good and lawful.*

**T**o imagine, that the King should intend to *warrant* the goodness of *Separations*, or alter their *evil nature*, and to make them good and *lawful*, is against all colour of *reason* in his *Declaration*, and guilty of *evil* *farmizes* against his *Crown* and *Dignity*: and makes the *Declaration* obnoxious to it self, and the known *Laws* of the *Land*.

The *Arguments*, which the King is pleased to acknowledge did prevail with him, to grant the *Indulgence*, are not from any error supposed to be in the *Laws* requiring *Conformity*, or from any *worth* or *goodness* that may be conceived to be *inherent* in *gathered Churches*; but from his own *grace* and *clemency* and *reasons of State*: that the *minds* of *male-contents* may be quieted, *strangers* invited, *trade* encouraged, and the danger of *private Meetings*, and *Seditious Conventicles* prevented.

Therefore, tis to be observed, that the said *Declaration* doth directly and in *termes* acknowledg that the

*Church of England* is establish'd by *Law*; the *Church of England* in opposition, and Contradistinction to *private Meetings*, both such as are *forbidden*, and such as shall be *allow'd* of according to the *Indulgence*. It moreover declares the *Kings express Resolution*, meaning, and intention to be that the *Church of England*, be preserved *intire*, and be taken to be as the *Basis*, *Rule*, and *Standard* of the general and *publick* worship among us. But, as for *other Meetings* if *condition'd* according to the tenour of the *Indulgence*; they shall be *Tolerated*, not for any *worth* or *goodnes* there is thought to be in them; onely, because of some *accidental* advantages, that, perhaps, the *Toleration* may draw after it.

For it is very obvious and plain, that the *Advantages* mention'd, are *such*, as are supposed, will follow the *Toleration*; and are not to be thought to be *consequent* to the *gathering* of *Churches*, nor can any *wise* man think so.

Nor is it fit, or becoming us to imagine, that to *take* this *liberty*, and to *gather* *Churches*, as a *thing* *directly* and *positively* *pleasing* to his *Majesty*: though, as I said, out of his *clemency* and for *reasons* of *State*, he at present permits it.

In the *Statutes* the *King* *directly* commands, that you shall not *seperate*; in this *Declaration* the *King* doth not command any *thing* *contrary* to the *Statutes*; much les, that you *should* *seperate*: I think, I may safely add, that the *Declaration* doth not so much, as *uncommand* or *uninjoyn* any *thing*, which the *Law* *properly* commands or *injoyns*.

The *King* is pleased indeed, to *suspend* the *executi-*  
*on* *of* the *penal Laws*: that is, he requires, by *virtue* of his *prerogative*, that *such as offend* the *Law* *by*

by Non-Conformity or Recusancy, shall not be punished. And I conceive, the offence is supposed, in that the penalty is suspended.

If we may speak a little more nicely, we may warrantably distinguish between the *Law*, and the *execution* of it; and then the *Declaration* seems onely to *suspend the execution*, and not properly to meddle with the *Law*. The *Law* hath two parts in its self: the *Preceptive* and the *Punitive*: the *Command*, which is the most *proper* and obliging part of the *Law*; and the *Punishment* annex'd to deter persons from the *Transgression* of it.

Now, me seems, the *Declaration* meddles with neither of these parts of the *Law*; as such; but the *Law* retains all its own proper force and internal vigour, both to *oblige* and to *punish*; onely the *execution*, which all know is *extrinsic* to the nature of the *Laws* is suspended by the *Declaration*; as the very words of it are.

Thus it seems the *Conscience* hath no more *liberty* then it had before, though the *body* and the *purse* have: and that the *Laws* requiring *Conformity*, have as great a force to oblige us in *Conscience* still; and that our doing *contrary* thereunto, is as much a *breach* of the *Law*, as before, and therefore *illegal* and in it self *evil*; and, with respect of the *Law*, worthy of and liable to *punishment*. Though the *King* is pleased to *command*, for other reasons, that the *penalty* shall not be inflicted.

The *sum* of this matter, is, that both *gathering* Churches, and likewise *not Conforming* to the worship of God with us, both these, I say, are stil *unlawful*, and in *Conscience* to be avoided; and the *Argument* taken from *Wrath*, onely, or the *penalty* of

*man*

*man* is removed by the Declaration, and nothing else. Much more is the force of *Gods Law*, the same upon us still: *duty to God and his Church*, is of an *Eternal* and immutable Nature: This cannot bend with Alteration of *Humane Counsels*: and this is as stiffly maintained by the *Presbyterian* as any. Now, my *bretbren* give me leave with some *plainness* to conclude, that notwithstanding the *present Toleration*, you have still many Arguments to Answer, even as many as *before*, if you venture upon *seperation* or erecting of *new Congregations*, all the Arguments from *God's publique Worship*, all those taken from the *safety*, *unity*, and *peace* of the Church: yea, even those that are taken from the Topic of *humane Laws*, both of Church and State: all these have their force still upon you, and bind your *Consciences* as much *now*, as *before* the *Declaration* was made.

All the Arguments against *seperation*, by Mr. *Ball* and the rest, called *Puritans*; and *Presbyterians*; particularly those lately of Mr. *Baxter* and Mr. *Crofton* for *Communion* with our *parochial Congregation* are still the same, and ought to be *answered*, before you begin your work of *seperation*, and think of building any new *Synagogues*: now what *Walls* you can make *strong enough* to secure you, in point of *Conscience*, against the batteries of so *great* a force, give me leave to say you may do well, first to *Consider*.

### Objection.

I know it will be said, that you have the approbation of *Authority* for your *seperation*, and gathering Churches: and, that this is more than the *Judgment* of private men.

But

But give me leave to answer: *this objection* favours of great *presumption* and *partiality*: of *presumption*, for where hath the *King* or his *Counsel* told you, that they do approve of your *seperation* or gathering *Churches*? I am sure not in the *Declaration*.

Indeed the *King* is pleased to say, that such *places* as you shall desire (if not judged by himself to be inconvenient) and such *persons* as shall be chosen to preach in *those places*, shall first be approved by himself; but where doth he say, that your *meeting* together in such places, shall be liked or *positively* approved of by him? there are two branches of the *Royal favour* exprested. 1. That the *execution* of the *panal laws* shall be and are suspended; wherein the *Papists* as well as other *Recusants* are concerned. 2. That *publique places* and *persons* to preach in them, shall be allowed, wherein the *Papists* are excluded. But the *King* is pleased to inform us, that *this* is the *fruit* of his *Indulgence to other mens Consciences*, and not *his own*, he no where saith, that such *seperations* are agreeable to *his own inclination*; and the meaning from the *whole drift* and *general scope* of the *declaration*, I humbly conceive is but this, that to prevent *greater inconveniencies*, especially the *disorders* of *lawless Conventicles*, the *inconvenience* of gathering *Churches* shall be *tolerated*, provided they meet only in such *places* as are open, and first known and *approved* by *his Majestie*: and hence it seems to me, very disloyally and ungratefully inferd, that your *seperations* have the *Kings approbation*.

But *Secondly*, as you thus *presume* upon the *King*, so you are too too *partial* in yourselves. You very well *know* and have given the *World* cause enough to understand, that the *Kings approbation* signifies but

little with you, where your *own* is wanting, otherwise, your *Conformity* had long since superceded the present *Indulgence*. It hath appeared, that such separation and gathering Churches, is unlawful *a priori* and antecedently to the *Declaration*, and that very *notoriously* in the judgment of the Best if not all the *Presbyterians*; and if so; what is the *Kings probation* or command with you to make it *lawful*, or practical, or fit to be done?

Let us put the case, that we were all in *Utopia*, (for I dare not so much as imagine it should ever fall out to be so in *England*) and that the *penalty* of the Laws against *Theft*, *Murther*, and *Adultery* was taken off, and an allowance given for *publick* meetings, wherein such *villanies* should be ordinarily *practised*. Pray tell me, (and I know you need not study the point) what *judgement* would you make in this case? Do you think the *Laws of God and Nature* would lose any of their force by this *Indulgence*? I know you do not. And I know also, that you may pardon and indulge an Argument by *Analogy* from *justice to piety*: the propositions of both being acknowledged, both by the *Old* and *New Philosophy*, and all kind of *Divinity*, to be of *immutable* and *eternal verity*.

## S E C T. III. P R O P. III.

*The inconveniencies of such Meetings, especially by the Presbyterians, are likely to be very great, and sad; and such as may justly affright them from making the Experiment.*

**H**itherto we have argued the matter in point of *Conscience*: now at last, let *Prudence* be heard: for there is no question, but the *Practice* will be found altogether as *inconvenient* as 'tis *unlawful*: and the inconveniencies *such*, as will not onely damage the *Church* and *Kingdome*, but more particularly prejudice your own *Party*. For First,

## The First Inconvenience.

*Respects the S E C T A R I E S.*

By *separating* and gathering *Churches* *your selves*, you will plainly lay down the *Cudges*, and beg the *peace*, and, in effect, the *pardon*, of all the rest of the *Sectaries*, as well as the *Independents*, as to the great *points* *abovesaid*; implicitly *confessing* the *errour* and *folly* of your *former*, so long, and so *fierce opposition*, against their *Separations*; which, as much as in you lies, you will *justify*; by setting up *your Altar* against *ours*, and drawing our people into your *select Congregations*, which, methinks, should be *grievous* both to your *persons* and *cause*. And which is far worse and *irksome*, you will hereby *tacitely*, and it the *opinion* of considering men, *acknowledg*,

that either *your principles* change with the *times*, ( a thing not easily to be observed in you, *in any thing else* ) or else , which is *worst* of all, that your *interest* lay at the bottom, and was the onely *Spring* and *wheel* of your *zeal*, and all your *motions*, and hot disputes against the *Sectaries*; which you *dissembled*, and *disguis'd* under those other *Arguments* of *Schism* and *Faction*, and the like. O Rather, let your *Ancient* and commendable *zeal* against *seperation* be well remembred, and you will not easily be drawn by the *present temptation* to a practice so manifestly *contradiciting* it, to the *dammage* of the *Church*, and the *shame* of your *profession*.

Consider , I beleech you, and see before hand, how like to *Independent Apes* ( pardon the exprefſion ) your *New Congregations* will make you look. *Your Churches* will be gathered as *theirs*: you can administer *Baptisme* and the *Lords Supper* to none, but those of your own *select* number: you cannot exercise *discipline*, but by the *consent* of your *people*: neither can you have any *church Government* but in your *single Congregations*, and that too *Independent* upon all other. Thus, as *others* are *Independents* by *choice* and *profession*, you will make *yourselfs* so by *necessity*; and that necessity *such*, as you wilfully throw your *selves* into, against all the light of *Presbyterian Conscience*, *Prudence*, and *Interest*; by a *needless* and *sinful*, a *scandalous* and *mischievous* *seperation*.

In *vain* do you think to help *your selves*, and to satisfie the *World*, by pleading the *moderation* of your *principles*: and that you will believe our *Parochial Congregations* are *true Churches*, which the of ther *Sectaries* deny. For besides that many of the *Independents*,

pendents acknowledge the same ; this is the great *aggravation* of your *schism* : for why then do you *separate* from us ? Others , when they leave us think they go out of *Babilon* : you acknowledge you go out of *Sion* ; and most directly and expressly gather *Churches* out of *Churches*, that are true *Churches*, both in themselves and your *own judgement* : and thus put your *own heads* , under the same *guilt* , which the *sectaries* were unwilling to bear.

Yet, this very consideration of the *Indulgence* , yields no small addition to the *Aggravation* : for the *reason* for *seperation* is much *abated* , though the *temptation* be *increased*. You have *not* plainly *separated* while the *conditions* of our *Communion* were more *hard* and *strict* upon you, and why will you *now* do it ? Now, I say, while *liberty* is *allowed* you to *omit* what you like *not*, and yet keep your *seats*, and your *fellowship* with us ?

## The Second Inconvenience.

*From your Brethrens sence of Toleration, &c.*

Another *Mischief* that apparently befalls you by such a *practice*, is the *condemning* your *selvies*, and the *Presbyterian* *Doctrine* in the point of *Toleration* ; which, you will hereby plainly allow and encourage against all the former *earnestness*, and most *vehement* *zeal* of your *Brethren*, to the *contrary* ; if by *virtue* of the present *Indulgence* , you shall set up your *Churches* against the *Establishment* ; and give *Example* to the rest of the *sectaries* so to do, under the *protection* of a *Toleration*.

For consider, have not all that have been *eminent* in your *way*, very stiffly withstood and argued, upon all occasions, against a *general Toleration*? yea, have not you *lately* refused the comprehension, and denied so great an *advantage* to your selves, because you could not have it, without a general *Toleration*? so that now, though there be a *Toleration* and a *connivence* granted without you, yet the *Comprehension* is not admitted, but the *Church of England* stands *unaltered* and as it was *before*: yea, it may not be amiss to advize with your selves, whether your *reason* and *passion* at *present*, suggest not some *arguments* against the *Indulgence* you would seem to *rejoyce* in?

Pray, look well upon that *deformed* face your own glas presents a *general Toleration* with, ( for here, I stand in *your person*, and declare your *fence* about *Toleration*, and not *my own*: far be it from me, to *condemn* or censure his gracious *Majesties* present *Indulgence*, yet doubtless, every man ought to endeavour in his place that it be not *abused*; and this is all that I have to do, well knowing that his *Majesties Counsel* may have greater reason to *Advize* a *Toleration*, than any of his *Subjects* to abuse the *liberty* permitted by it.)

I am inclined to believe that no arguments can be found so *powerfull* to prevent the *abuse* of this *liberty* in our *Presbyterian* brethren, as those which the ablest *Presbyterians* used formerly to prevent a *Toleration*: and I hope it will be, therefore, no offence to the government to remember my *brethren* of them, for so good an *end*.

*Their Arguments*, I find, were *chiefly* taken, from *League and Covenant*, and from the *mischievous consequences* of a *general Toleration*. I

I shall but briefly touch the *former*, only my *brethren* may do well to mind, that they have at least, as much reason to conceive they are bound by their *Covenant* against *Schism*, and things *really evill*, as against that that is *not so*; but moreover, is made necessary to us by the *Law* of the Land. Now thus, the *London Ministers* in their letter to the *Assembly*, conclude, that such a *Toleration* is utterly repugnant and inconsistent with the *Solemn League and Covenant*, for *Reformation* and defense of *Religion*, for *Uniformity* and the extirpation of *Schism*; I know you are very unwilling to be thought to *renounce* your *Covenant*; the *consequence* of your *brethren* I leave to your own consideration.

The other argument against *Toleration* taken from the frightfull *Consequences* of it, is indeed their *Goliab*, this because it more *immediately* discovers their strange resentment, and fearful apprehensions of that very *evil* from which we have taken this pains to deterr you: *viz Schism*, and erecting of *seperate Congregations*; I take a little more notice and observation of it: and to that end, I am again a *debtor* to the book before quoted, called *Tolleration disapproved*, printed 1670.

In that Book, you have the judgment of twenty of the most eminent *Presbyterians* in their Sermons before the *Lords* and *Commons*, collected, against *Toleration*; and their Arguments are generally taken from the *same Topick*, the abuse of it, by *Schisms* and *factions*. I shall only trouble you with the *smart* discourse of one of them, who spake the *general sense* of his *brethren*, after a *warmer* manner then ordinary, but much to the *purpose* they are the words of Mr. *Edwards*, as I find them in the *foresaid Collection*. That

That *Ministers*, saith he, in our times may be a means to prevent and suppress the *errors*, *heresies* & *Schisms*, they must not only often *preach* against them but they shalld set themselves against *all the wayes*, by which *errors* are come in and are further coming in upon us, and oppose them by *preaching* and *writing*, as *Lay-mens preaching*, the *gathering* of *churches*, and above all *Toleration*. — If *ministers* will witness for *truth*, and against *errors*, they must set themselves in a special manner against a *Toleration*, as the *principal Inlet* to all *Heretie* and *error*. — a *Toleration* will undo all: first being in *Sceptism* in *Doctrine*, and *loofness* of *life*, and afterwards all *Atheism*.

Let us therefore, as he goes on, fill all *Preffes*, cause all *Pulpits* to ring, and so posses the *Parliament City* and the whole *Kingdom* against the *Sects*, and of the *evil* of *Schism* and *Toleration*: that we may no more hear of *Toleration* nor of *seperated Churches*, being *hatefull names* in the *church of God*. Amen, Amen.

The *London Ministers* from *Sion-Colledg* sent their *fears* also about *Toler.ation* to the *Assembly of Divines* and were they not raised upon the same *grounds*? Mr. *Trapp* an *Expositor* of the *Bible*, bath among his notes upon *Exodus* collected out of that letter, *these words* to our purpose. What *secret* and *subtil projects* and *practises* are there amongst *us* of this *Nation*, to bring in an *universal*, *boundles*, *Lawles*, *abominable*, and *intollerable Toleration*? which will prove an *hideous* and *complexive* *evil* of most *dangerous* and *mischeivous consequencies*, if ever (which *God* forbid, as they say) it should be consented to by *Author.ity*. *England* shall be swallowed up with *Sects*, *Schisms*

Sickisms, divisions, disorders, contentions, and confusions, and become an odious Sinck and common Receptacle of all the prodigious errors, lies, Heresies, Blasphemies, libertinism, and profaneness; so that Rome it self, shall not be a more odious Cage and puddle of all Abomination and uncleanness. The Godly shall sit down and lament us, the wicked shall rise up and insult over us: all the Nations about us, shall be amazed at us: all the Reformed Churches shall be ashamed to own us.

This is the sad prospect the Presbyterians once had of a Toleration, but not so much for its own sake you see, as for the fearfull effects, or rather abuses of it. All the mischiefs proceed rather from the persons Tolerated then from Toleration it self. Indeed the Presbyterians were thus vehemently bent against Toleration it self, because they conceived that the mischiefs of it were unavoidable, and inseparable from it: insomuch that though I have nothing to say against the Toleration, yet, I cannot but wonder, that the spirit of Presbytery, should ever like it, or rejoice in it.

Can any change of times alter the Eternal reason of things? or reconcile any sober party, to the means of a general ruine? shall we be the same, and unalterable in every thing that may break the peace, and dissolve unity, and onely admit a change in our minds and practises in such things, as are morally necessary to publique security? God forbid.

Perhaps, you will say you care not for a Toleration: but consider, can you more signally own recognize, or more expressly give your unfeigned assent and consent unto, and approbation of both Toleration and Schism, then not only by desiring to escape the pe-

nality of laws, and to live quietly in a state of *separation*, by virtue of it, but also by taking the utmost *Advantage* of it, for the erecting distinct and *seperate* Congregations to your selves?

I say again, tis not my busyness to speak against a *Toleration*, but my endeavour is to prevent the *mischiefs* of it, those mischiefs of *Schism* and endless separations, that made the thoughts of *Toleration* so horrible to your *Fathers*. You may choose whether you will put it to that *ill use*, for which they so much feared it, do not then divide the Church, do not *separate* from us, above all, do not dare to run so contrary to *peace* and unity, and the just sentiments of all your eminent leaders, that are gon before, as to erect *new* Churches, in opposition to us: and to the incouragement of our *common* enemies, and the *Scandal* and *Hazard* of the poor distressed *Church* of *England*.

### The third Inconvenience.

*from the nature of the practice*

Another *Inconvenience*, which perhaps you are not yet aware of, will meet you in your work; either while you are *gathering* your Churches, or when *gathered*: or *both*.

If you meet but with a *single Inconvenience* in this work, I shall think you are very *luckie*; especially, if your *provincie* ly in the *Country*, for consider aforehand, from how many *folds*, I mean *Parishes*, you must fetch your *flock*: and then the observation of former *Presbyterians*, from the *experience* of the *Independents*, taken will presently mind you of

of one great *inconvenience*; for so they reputed it. For, if you gather Churches as the *Independents* did, your *Members* must necessary live at too great a *distance* one from another, to perform the *Offices* of *Church-Members* one to another; or for the *Minister* to perform his office to them *all*; without much trouble and *manifest inconvenience*. This *Argument*, I remember, the *Presbyterians* used, to shew the *unreasonable*ness of gathered Churches, after the mode of *Independency*.

And now I have mentioned *Independency*, it comes into my mind, that the *cunning* of the *Independents*, may put a very shrewd *inconvenience* upon you: they use, you know, to be ever before *hand* with you; and it is ten to one, but they will *prevent* you in this *New experiment*, and if they chance to shake the *Tree* before you come, for ought you know, the *fruit*, that was *ripe* and *ready* for you, had you come in *Season*, may fall in their *Lap*: and *what remains* when you endeavour to *shake* too late, may be found too *stiffe* and *fix'd*, and beyond your *strength*; and the *inconvenience of Labour in Vain* you may find for your *pains*; besides the *division* of both *Parties*; the *Independent*, that hath shew'd you a *trick*, and the *true Protestant*, that you cannot *shake*, though you would fain do it. And I should hold it adviseable for you, rather not to attempt, then to run the hazard of a *double baffle*. For if *this* should chance to be your lot, you will be somewhat sensible of the *inconveniencie* you have suffered in providing the

place to meet in, and procuring his *Majesties*. Approbation, both of the place and your selves to no purpose.

But, I know you have a better *confidence*, and I am contented to suppose, that you may possibly gather together a few *stragling sheep* out of other mens folds, but are you sure to *keep* them together? for they do not presently forsake their *wandering* gift, there will not be wanting such, as may exercise your *vigilancy*, by undermining you, and endeavouring to *flock* them away from you, and pay you for us, in your coin.

Besides, if you cast a little with your selves, how great the trouble will be to your *people* in coming often together, besides the *inconsistency* of the present *poverty*, and want of monies, among the *people*; and the necessity of paying *their Tithes* to their own *Parish-Minister*, with a *liberal* maintainance for your pains amongst them, *voluntarily* to be bestowed upon your selves; and lastly, the *indifferency* or Nullity in Religion which a *Tolleration*, a liberty may reduce the Common sort of the *People* to; all these I say, put together, may accumulate so considerable an inconvenience, that a wise and prudent *prospect* of it, may peradventure, afford you reason *sufficient*, not to begin; if not to assure you of a speedy *end* of such wild projects: and that in a little time, such *gathered* meetings will even *dwindle* away of themselves, into their first *Original* of *nothing*. For you may not too boldly

boldly expect any great blessing from *God* for them, seeing, they are found out of *his way* and their *own* too; as they were at first gathered, in opposition to *his Church*, and contrary to *his word*, and the professed *principles* of such as busie themselves about them.

But *these* are the Inconveniencies that attend the *Country*; and you are *wiser* and know how to prevent and avoid them all, by planting your selves in *greater Towns*: this gives me occasion to enlarge a little further upon an *inconvenience* I lately hinted, but now meets us again *more directly* in the *Streets* of Cities and Corporations, the places designed, it seemes, for your happier *Adventures*: For here also, the *other Sectaries* will have the same reason of their *own Interest*; to sit down too, and set up for themselves *against you*, as well as *us*. 'Tis granted indeed, that tis more then possible the *Novelty* and *industry* of your endeavours, may somewhat lesslen our *Congregations*; but there is the same possibility that the wily *Independent* will draw from yours, and the *Anabaptist* from his, and the *Quaker* that *Common Shore*, drain the *Anabaptists* and all the rest, yea, who can assure you that all these *other Sects*, may not conspire together, against their old and perchance not yet forgotten, enemy, the *Presbyterian*? and that I 'fear you will find to be no small Inconvenience.

But seriously, my brethren, you may easily foresee, how little the advantage will be to your *way*, by gathering among so many *shuslers*, and yet how necessary and great the *disadvantage* and confusion will be, both to the *Church* and *Kingdom*: which the *God of peace and order*, in his mercy to both, give you wisdom to consider, and prevent in time.

### The fourth Inconvenience.

*Respects your present Conformity.*

Another inconvenience is reflected upon you, from that measure of *Communion*, which most of you, have hitherto held with the *Church of England*, if you now *depart* and fall quite away from us. For thus, you will publish to the world, that your *compliance* with us, before the *Toleration*, was not out of *fence of duty*, or *love of peace and unity*, or any other good end; but merely out of *slavish fear*, of punishment, by the execution of the *Laws*; which being now *suspended* the *spring of your motion* is weakened, or broken, wherefore you fly off and *conform* no longer.

'Tis plain, that, so doing, you proclaim your *cowardice*, or a *love of licentiousness*: or worse, you put on *liberty* for a *cloak of maliciousness* and revenge upon the *Church*, and not as the *servants of Christ*, which be far from you.

For if you did not apprehend it your *duty* to conform, when you did so, you conformed for *wrath*

*wrath*, and not for *Conscience sake*; and argued a defect in your *courage* to suffer for *Conscience*. But if you did conform before, out of *Conscience* of your *duty* to God and the *Church*, you did well. But now, why is it not *duty* still? what hath *disobliged* your *Conscience* since? If you now leave us, you renounce your *Conscience*, and shew your *wantonness* and love of *liberty*, more than *duty*: or, which I am loath to think, you *design ill* against the *Church of England*.

Continue therefore, and proceed to *worship* God together with us, then all is well. *Conscience* is safe: *duty* is performed: and the *Church* so far secured: and none of these *inconveniences* can disturb you, or evil *suspicions* fasten upon you.

Others among you have erred upon the *other hand*, and denied to *conform* in some respects, out of a strange and *untowardly* principle of *hardness* against *Law* and *Government*; saying, they would not be *compell'd* to their *duty*. Others, have more *sticly* and *cunningly* pleaded their *Christian liberty* against *conformity*; urging, that because some things *indifferent* in themselves, were *commanded*; and because their attendance upon the *Common-prayer* was *injoyn'd* and *inforced* by *Law*, their *Christian liberty* was thus invaded; and as *Christians* they are bound to stand *fast in that Liberty*.

To both these *Objectors*, there happens an *inconveniencie*, (if they now should *seperate*) even from the *Declaration* it self, for it answers your objections, by letting you *at liberty*: and the force

force of your *Argument*, is gon with the force of *compulsion* for that notable hinderance of your *conformity* is perfectly removed out of your way.

If you should now seperate, where is your *ingenuity*? or the *sincerity* of your plea? you were loath to be *compelled*; you may do your duty to God and the Church *freely* and without compulsion; you have now no *temptation* left you, to prize *liberty* above *duty*: you need no longer omit your *duty* to keep your *liberty*; or to *run away* from *that* that you may *stand fast* in *this*. Rejoice then in your *liberty*, but do your *duty*: which is, certainly the truest, and best, and safest way of *using* your *liberty*, and the Kings *Indulgence* in his Declaration.

### The-fift and last Inconveniencie.

Divisions *make way for* Confusion  
and Popery.

Lastly, what other *fruits* of Divisions can be thought of, that your *seperation* gives us not cause to *fear*? what contentions, *envyings*, clamours, animosites, and *evil speaking*? what malice, hatreds, evil surmizes, censuring and condemning one another? where *envyng*, and *strife* is, there is *Confusion* and *every evil work*: yea, what can we reasonably expect but the *decay of Religion*, the wasting of *Conscience*, the increase of *profaneness*, and the groth and spreading if not the *overflowing* of *Popery*? and indeed of *Atheism*; things

things which you as well as we do desire God of his mercy to avert from us? Reflect a little upon the judgment of your Brethren, as before is noted, and you your selves can hardly be perswaded to have any better *hopes*.

Plato teacheth, that in all *Common-wealths*, upon just grounds, theremay be some *changes*; and I doubt not, but his *Majesty* and *Counsel* will use a *vigilance*, especially in time of *Liberty*, that shall bear proportion to the *Serpentine subtilty* of this formidable Adversary: yet the *experience* of many years assures us that the *Papists* are, with difficulty enough, restrained, and kept within *Compacts*, by *severest Laws*: and upon the least *alteration* among us, it shall go hard if the *Pope* reap no *advantage*.

Tis noted by *Historians*, that *Factions* and *Divisions* among our selves in *England* have more then once already betray'd us to *forreign Invasion* and *usurpation*: when *Cesar* first entred *England*, he was invited in, by the *Faction* of *Mandubratius*: and *Tacitus* acknowledgeth that the *Factions* and *Divisions*, which were among the *Britains* gave advantage to the *Roman victories*. And *Vortigerne*, first got the *British Kingdom*, by the same method of *Faction*; and then called in the *Saxons*; who taking the same advantage of those *Divisions*, made themselves Masters of all. Lastly, When the *Normans* took *England* they were also called in, and possessed themselves by the means of some *Factions*, that were among us, especially the *Faction* of *Earl Goodwin* and his Son *Tostav*.

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What

What hath been *may* be: O let not our *Divisions* tempt the *Romanes* to triē again: dare you, my *Brethren*, make a *Breach* to let them in? they are forward enough to come uninvited, having a mind to both our *City* and *Nation*, but do you take heed of the old Proverb, that the *Pope* shall come upon the *Puritans* Back.

My *Bretheren*, I know, you hate *Papery* in your *hearts*; yet let me beseech you, to take heed of having a *hand* in its *introduction*, while you are not aware. Remember, our *Strength* lies not in *Number*, but in *Union*, while you are busie in building an *Ark*, behold the *Philistians* at hand to *take* it from you, while you are labouring towards a *Harvest*, these *sie Foxes* have *fire* in their *Tails*.

I question not the *Wisdom* and circumspection of the *Government*, but I advise you heartily not so to abuse your *Liberty*, as to hazard our *Religion* and enthrall our Persons, our *Church* and *Nation*, in *Superstition* and *Popish Bondage*.

England is the *Strength* and *Beauty*, and for ought you know too, the best *security* under God, of all the *Reformed Churches*; and for ought you know too, your continuing and proceeding to widen the *Breach*, may prove a sad means of letting in the *Sea of Rome*, as a *Torrent* upon the whole *Reformation*.

Be it far from you, my *Dear Brethren*, to run such *desperate hazards*: or to number your selves <sup>Mr. Clark out</sup> with those (to use the words of *Friend of Mr. Hier.* of yours) with those I say that care *Burrows*. not what the *Divisions* are if so be their

Turn

*Turn* may be served ; this is abominable, (saith he) and *cursed* is that man that *wifbeth* for, or *rejoyceth* in, or seeks the continuance of *Divisions* for such base ends, yea ( as he adds *bravely*) he is not worthy to breath in so good an Air, as *England* is, that would not *willingly* lay down his life, to cure the present Divisions that are among us.

I have only to add, that if all that hath been said, suffice not to perswade you to *forbear dividing*; to so great a *scandal*, and so many *hazards* of this poor Church ; you must give me leave, to *summon* you to *answer* me *another day*.

Farewell.

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**F I N I S.**

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